

I am writing to express my concern about the Governor's proposed budget cuts to the Community Investment Act (50%) and to support the Council on Environmental Quality (zero funding).

The Community Investment Act has been a source of needed funds for the City of Middletown and for many other communities, during a period when state budgets for historic preservation, open space preservation, affordable housing, and local agriculture have been under significant downward pressure. I have seen what these dedicated funds have been able to accomplish to preserve and protect the quality of life in our community.

Not only should funding of the Community Investment Act be maintained, but I am hopeful that more communities will opt to adopt a conveyance fee on property transfers that would stay with the local community for open space preservation, regarding which (HB 6926) I intend to testify separately from this communication.

I am also alarmed by the proposal to reduce funding for the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to zero. CEQ is a very small but important and independent agency to monitor threats to our state's environment and inform the public and legislators about these threats. The long-term and ongoing measures needed to protect our state's natural resources, its beauty, and its wildlife include conservation of more open space, careful monitoring of wildlife habitat, and protection of water resources.

I know that our State is facing serious budget challenges, but the Community Investment Act and the Council for Environmental Quality are among the most cost-effective means to protect natural resources and our quality of life.

Thank you for your consideration of these views.

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